13 per cent to 6 to 13 per cent. While the lowest rate offered was 10 per cent by all the 27 public sector banks in March 1996, presently a large number (17) are offering a rate of 7 per cent on shoftest maturities; others are offering rates ranging between 7.5 and 8.5 per cent. At the longer maturity of over 3 years, while all the 27 banks were offering 13 per cent during March 1996 to September 1996, the interest rates of two banks remained unchanged till February 1997 and fifteen banks reduced the rates by 0.5 percentage point. All the 27 banks are. offering 12.0 per cent on deposits with maturity of 2 to 3 years. Thus, at the longer end of the maturity spectrum, the interest rates offered have not changed much.

The lower rates offered on deposits of shorter maturities in the recent period have not had any adverse impact on deposit mobilisation by banks tluring the current financial year so far.

(d) RBI have also reported that the Deposit Insurance Scheme is being operated by the Deposit Insurances and Credit Guarantee Corporation to protect the interest of small depositors against the loss of their deposits to the extent of Rs. 1 lakh.

Capital Punishment for Drugs/Narcotic trafficking

2467. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether illicit traffic in drugs and narcotics has been assuming an alarming proportion over the years;

(b) whether this social menace is to be combated urgently;

(c) whether Government have been suggested that those engaged in smuggling of smack in the country should be hanged; and

(d) if so, the details thereof with measures to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) Drug trafficking is a clandestine activity and therefore it cannot be said definitely whether over the years, illicit trafficking jn narcotic drugs has assumed alarming proportions. However as per information available, the details of Narcotic Drugs seized in the country during the last two years are give below:-

Name of drug	Quan-tity of 1995	Drugs in Kg. 1996 (Provi-sional)
Heroin	1678	1173
Hashish	3629	6414
Opium	1339	2735
Ganja	121873	60892
Methaqualone	20485	2210

(b) Yes, Sir. Government of India has already taken a number of necessary steps to deal with this social menace.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Steps to Check Black Marketing of Gold and Silver

2468. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that black marketing of gold and silver in the country can be checked by import of gold and silver; and

(b) if so, the details thereof with initiatives to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) The Government have allowed import of gold and silver through licit channels by NRIs and importers holding special Import Licence on payment of customs duty in foreign exchange. It is believed that with the availability of substantial quantity of gold and silver, the clandestine

trade in these metals has reduced. The Government have recently taken steps to increase the availability of gold in the domestic market by increasing the ceiling of gold which the returning NRIs are eligible to bring into India from 5 kgs. to 10 kgs.

बैंक हड़ताल के संबंध में छपी खबर

2469. **श्री अखिलेश दास**: क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान 4 फरवरी, 1997 की बैंक कर्मचारियों की हड़ताल के आह्वान के संबंध में दैनिक हिन्दुस्तान में दिनांक 24 फरवरी, 1997 को छपी खबर की ओर आकृष्ट किया गया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस हड़ताल के क्या कारण है; और

(ग) सरकार बैंक कर्मचारियों की मांग को पूरा करने के लिए क्या-क्या कदम उठा रही है?

वित्त मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री एम. पी. वीरेन्द्र कुमार) : (क) जी, हां।

(ख) और (ग) भारतीय बैंक संघ (आई.बी.ए.) ने सुचित किया है कि बैकों में शीर्ष स्तर के कर्मचारी/ अधिकारी संगठनों ने दिनांक 4 अप्रैल, 1997 को राष्ट्रव्यापी गैर-हाजिर हड़ताल का प्रस्ताव किया है। मुख्य मांगो में, अन्य बातों के साथ-साथ, गैर-सरकारी क्षेत्र के भारतीय बैंकों में पेंशन-समझौते का कार्यन्वयन, क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंको मे छठे द्विपक्षीय समझौते / अधिकारियों के वेतन संशोधन का कार्यान्वयन, ग्रेच्युटी और बोनस के संबंध में उच्चतम-सीमा को हटाना तथा स्थानीय क्षेत्र के बैंकों को स्थापित न करना शामिल है। आई.बी.ए ने यह भी सूचित किया है कि मुख्य श्रम आयुक्त (केन्द्रीय) से अनुरोध किया गया है कि समझौता कार्यवाई शुरू करने के लिए इस मामले में हस्तक्षेप करे।

Panel of office bearers for appointment as officer-Director in Punjab and Sink Bank

2470. SHRI GURUDAS DAS-GUPTA: SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Finance, Banking Division, in July, 1995 asked Punjab and Sind Bank to furnish the panel of five office-bearers for appointment as Officer Director from the majority representative association of the officers of the bank;

(b) whether Punjab and Sind Bank submitted the same in October/ November, 1995;

(c) whether Reserve Bank of India has also sent its recommendations to the Ministry of Finance regarding the above panel;

(d) whether no officer-nominee Director has been appointed on the Borad of Punjab and Sind Bank since nationalisation; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor and action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (c) Nomination of officer employee directors on the boards of nationalised banks are made in accordance with the criteria and procedure prescribed in the relevant statutes and Government's guidelines in this regard. The guidelines were revised in July, 1995. The Punjab & Sind Bank submitted a panel of names of office bearers of the majority officers' association in the bank in accordance with these guidelines. Reserve Bank of India was consulted in the matter.

(d) No officer employee director has been nominated on the board of Punjab & Sind Bank since its nationalisation.